



Gamelan of Java

VOLUME THREE: YOGYAKARTA

Unabridged Program Notes

A Pendopo in Yogya.....Hardja Susilo



Bapak Hardja Susilo, or Pak Sus as he is affectionately called in the international gamelan community, was born in Yogyakarta on December 3, 1934. At age 3, the whole family moved to kampung Ngadisuryan, inside the Sultan's walled compound. He learned to play gamelan at Prince Hangabehi's residence and learned dance at Prince Pudjokusumo's and Prince Tedjokusumo's residences. In 1958 he received an assistantship that took him to the United States, at UCLA, to study Western music and research method in Ethnomusicology, while teaching gamelan. He

studied Solonese style initially with Bpk Wiranto, the principal of Konservatory Karawitan Surakarta, and later with Bpk Martopangrawit. In 1993, he received the "Hadiah Seni" (Art Prize) from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia "for extra-ordinary achievements in the field of the art of Karawitan." Bapak Hardja Susilo is a retired Associate Professor in Ethnomusicology at the University of Hawaii.

The release of *Gamelan of Java, Volume III: Yogyakarta* by John Noise Manis is a welcome addition to the poorly-represented Javanese *karawitan* Yogyakarta or Mataraman style. Mataram was the Central Javanese kingdom before it was split into Surakarta and Yogyakarta in 1755. The palace was located a few kilometers southeast of the present city of Yogyakarta.

Although the gamelan set being used for this recording does not have the pedigree of some of the earlier recordings, nonetheless it belonged to the late Ki Tjokrowasito, a musician, teacher, composer well known among gamelan aficionados worldwide. Thus, one can count on the quality of its timbre and the accuracy of its tuning. The music was recorded in his gamelan hall, which adheres to the *pendhapa* architecture of Mangkunegaran and Pakualaman, although considerably smaller.

The album presents three gendhing: Gendhing **Babar Layar** (Casting the Sail) pelog lima, Gendhing ketawang **Cokrowolo** (Horizon) slendro sanga, and Gendhing **Marasanja** (Come to Visit) slendro nem.

In categorizing *gendhing*, a Javanese instrumental composition for gamelan which may or may not include vocal parts, the Yogyakarta palace musicians traditionally use a criterion of "size." They speak of small gendhing: *gendhing ladrangan*, *gendhing ketawang*, *gendhing bibaran*, *gendhing bibaran lamba* (the term is no longer common in Yogya, in favor of the Solonese term *lancaran*), and *gendhing lampah* (pieces for action scenes in Javanese theatre). They speak of *Gendhing Lala* or *Ketawang Gendhing* and *Gendhing Alit* (small gendhing), *Gendhing Tengahan* (medium size gendhing), and *Gendhing Ageng* (large size gendhing). It will be noted that a piece of music is codified according to its "size" rather than its length. The rationale of it is that a small gendhing can become long when it is repeated over and over as is typical in the Javanese gamelan tradition, but it remains small regardless how long it may become. The size of a gendhing is determined by the number of *saron* beats, and the number of *kethuk-kenong* strokes per *gongan* (musical phrase which ends with a stroke of Gong), as well as whether or not the gendhing includes *kempul* in its colometric/accentsuation pattern. Gendhing Babar Layar and Gendhing Marasanja are very good examples of Gendhing Ageng: they have four strokes of kenong (N in balungan notation) to a stroke of gong (G). The first three *kenongan*, a musical phrase that ends with a stroke of kenong, consist of four phrases 16-beats long marked by a *kethuk* (t) stroke half-way, and ending on a *wela* (w, aurally unmarked end of a musical phrase), and the fourth *kenongan* is marked with a stroke of kenong.

Normally after the *Buka* (introduction) Gendhing Alit, Tengahan, and Ageng would have two parts, *Merong* and *nDhawah*. To proceed from Merong to nDhawah a piece would go through a transition called *Pangkat nDhawah* (departure to nDhawah). Being Gendhing Ageng, both Babar Layar and Marasanja have 64 beats per kenongan, four kenongan per gongan, in other words 256 saron beats per stroke of Gong. In these gendhing the nDhawah sections are half the size of the Merong. In contrast, Ketawang Cokrowolo, a small gendhing with *kempul*, only has two kenong strokes per gongan, and only eight beats of saron per kenongan. In this form the *kethuk* is hit on beat 2 and 6 in each kenongan.

In Babar Layar and Marasanja the *kethuk* is struck on beats 8, 24, 40, and 56. Here the role of the *kethuk* as an "audible bar line" is extremely important, as it is a point of reference to the *kenong*, and the role of *kenong* is very important as it is a point of reference to the gong player. In *irama II*, during the Merong, the Gong player hits his instrument about every six minutes, inspiring the joke that in a piece this size the gong player may hit a gong, then make himself a cup of tea, and comfortably return for the next gong stroke. The less frequently the gong is struck, the more anticipation it creates, and the more disappointing its absence is felt. I can't think of anything more embarrassing than missing a gong stroke in a piece the size of Babar Layar. He can count on everyone to turn his head to him and giving him a very unpleasant smile.

In the Mataraman tradition, Babar Layar and Marasanja as presented in this album are referred to as *gendhing soran*, from the word *sora*, or loud. Typically, as do Solonese *gendhing bonang*, *gendhing soran* exclude a vocal part of any kind as well as "the front row instruments," the *gender barung*, *gender panerus*, *gambang*, *clempung*, *siter*, *rebab*, and flute. Common practice in Mataraman soran, when rests or sustain are called for, instead of silence the saron would perform *necek*, an onomatopoeic term referring to the deliberate hitting of a saron key while it is being damped, creating the sound "cek, cek."

Although Yogyakarta and Solonese *bonang* elaborations are based on the same principle, a student of style might pay attention to the specific *bonang* "licks" which typify Yogyakarta style in this recording. Also typical in this style, rather than strictly adhering to its density referents, the *bonang* may often "counterpoint" the pulse, giving the illusion of momentary freedom.

In addition to the different *kendhang gendhing* (large drum) patterns employed in this recording, the *penunthung*, played on the *ketipung* (small drum), in fast tempo would hit on the off-beat, while in slow tempo it is played on the odd beat, i.e. beat 1, 3, 5, etc. and half-way to the next saron beat.

It is common for the main body of a Gendhing Ageng to have two sections: Merong and nDhawah. To go from Merong to nDhawah a piece normally undergoes a transition called *Pangkat nDhawah*. The usual procedure is thus: about 60 beats before the gong, the drum accelerates the tempo until it reaches *irama I*, a relatively fast tempo. Some gendhing have a special passage for *Pangkat nDhawah*, others have merely the abstraction of the last portion of Merong. Sometimes the nDhawah of a gendhing is replaced with another gendhing, or the nDhawah part of another gendhing. To continue to another gendhing, in part or in whole, after Merong or after nDhawah, is termed *Minggah*.

BABAR LAYAR

Gendhing Babar Layar begins with two phrases of *adangiyah* (a very short prelude to the introduction identifying the mode of the piece) by the *bonang barung* (heretofore: *bonang*) responded by the saron group in the manner of the ceremonial gamelan Sekati. It is followed by the introduction proper of Gendhing Babar Layar. Four beats before the Gong, rather than maintaining the melody as the Solonese style *bonang* would, here the *bonang* anticipates the Gong tone with *gembyang* (octave playing) on the even beats, setting the *tempo* in the process. As the piece proceeds, one learns that this gendhing is unique in its melodic lines and unusual in its structure. From the first stroke of the Gong, gamelan connoisseurs will recognize immediately that this is not the Babar Layar that they have heard before. In fact, after being a gamelan student for more than 60 years, this is the first time that I am hearing Gendhing Babar Layar Mataraman in its complete form.

While it is common for a gendhing this size to contain two sections, Merong and nDhawah, it is uncommon that the nDhawah section include an extra *gongan*, a *sesegan gongan*, i.e. a fast section which might be comparable to the idea of *stretto*. Another unusual thing about this piece is that it has an *Ompak Suwuk*, a section which is only played to end the gendhing. Perhaps this portion is comparable to the idea of a *coda*.

The introduction is followed by two *gongan* of merong. Toward the end of the second *gongan* the tempo accelerates to signal *Pangkat nDhawah*, or transition to the nDhawah. Here I feel I miss 32 saron beats. Furthermore the transition proper is rather awkward as the *kenong* pitch 3 is followed by pitch 4. Although such juxtaposition may be found in other gendhing, I find it awkward in this 27-minute piece as it is never introduced before, nor does it recur afterwards.

As the piece enters the nDhawah section a pair of *kempyang* is added in the instrumentation. Struck on the odd beats *kempyang* is exclusively used in pelog gendhing. The pair of horizontally mounted mini gongs are tuned to pitch 6 and 7 of the "male" row (upper octave) of the pelog *bonang barung*. They are struck simultaneously, contributing "sweet and sour" dissonance to the texture. The tempo slows down further to play the two *gongan* of nDhawah. The subtle increase of speed toward the end of the second *gongan* signals that the piece proceeds to the *sesegan gongan*. The *sesegan gongan* is repeated and the tempo is accelerated to a climax. The somewhat sudden *ritardando* leads the piece to *Ompak Suwuk* where this gendhing ends.

In my childhood, our teacher discouraged our learning a piece this size. It would have been considered ostentatious, and the concentration required by such Gendhing Ageng would be too strenuous for our small brains...it might have driven us mad! So, as children we were only taught the rousing nDhawah section of Babar Layar. In fact the reduced form of Babar Layar is the Babar Layar that most musicians know how to play. "Reshaped" into the *ladrang* form (32 beat rhythmic cycle), the

more widely known Ladrang Babar Layar has a kenong stroke on beat 8, 16, 24, and 32 instead of beat 64, 96, 128, and 256, and the Gong is hit on beat 32, rather than 256. In addition the piece would employ a lively ladrang drum pattern. The reduced form of Babar Layar is in fact the Babar Layar that most musicians know very well, hence the flawless performance of this section in the recording.

The original Babar Layar—the Babar Layar in this recording—employs a subdued *kendhang gendhing* (large drum) pattern that is liven up with the *penunthung*, played on the *ketipung* (small drum). In fast tempo the *ketipung* would be played on the off beat, while in slow tempo it is sounded on the odd beat, i.e. beat 1, 3, 5, etc. and half-way to the next saron beat.

COKROWOLO

At first hearing, Cokrowolo sounds like a composite of several familiar gendhing, and thus gives us an immediate aural recognition. The Yogyanese style is apparent from the minute the drum enters, as the drummer, employing a Mataraman *keta-wang* drum pattern, retards the tempo before the stroke of the first Gong, thus enabling the *gender* to play in *irama II* immediately. The next cue that it is in Mataraman style is the fact that the *kempul* is sounded on the fourth beat after the Gong, a place which the more familiar Solonese style would leave it *wela*.

Structured in *ketawang* form, the piece begins with the *Buka* (introduction) by the *rebab*. The melody of the introduction is generic, meaning that this *buka* could lead to dozens of other *ketawang* in *slendro sanga*. It is followed by one gongan *ompak* (lit. "stilt," a musical interlude between chorus) stated twice each time the piece is repeated. In each gongan the kenong is hit on beat 8 and 16, with the second kenong stroke, coinciding with the Gong. The *kempul* is hit on beats 4 and 12, the *kethuk* on 2, 6, 10, and 14. In this performance the *kethuk* player is somewhat undecided as to what style of *kethuk* pattern he wants to play. Furthermore, as hard as he tries, he seems unable to resist carrying over the habit of playing "dribbling" *kethuk* of the Solonese tradition.

During the *ompak* a *pesindhen* (female singer) sings old *wangsalan* (riddle poem) solo. After the second statement of *ompak*, the piece proceeds to the *Ngelik* section where the *gerong* (male chorus) sing an old *Kinanthi* poem in unison (minutes 1:30 to 3:05, 6:51 to 8:25, and 11:45 to end). This is all common practice.

What is unusual about this *ketawang* is the vocal treatment of the second and fourth statements (or sections) of the piece. Cokrowolo uses three types of poems: *wangsalan*, *macapat Kinanthi* (one of the 11 traditional *tembang macapat* forms), and *lelagon* (light hearted song in free poetic form, which occurs at minutes 3:09 to 5:41 and 8:27 to 10:41). The piece is played in five *ulihan* (i.e. it is stated five times) alternating the poetic forms: beginning with *wangsalan-macapat*, following with *lelagon*, *wangsalan-macapat*, *lelagon*, and ending with *wangsalan-macapat*. It is conventional to have a vocal arrangement in which the *pesindhen* sings the *wangsalan*, solo, during the *ompak*, while the *gerong* supply *alok*, vocal interjections; and the *gerong* sing the *macapat* in the *ngelik* section, as the *pesindhen* provides melodic paraphrases. However, it is not common to alternate this method of operation with *lelagon*, an entirely different song, on the same *balungan*. The *balungan* and the *wangsalan-macapat* singing are very traditional in their melodic structures. So traditional that together they sound like a small medley composed of fragments of old pieces. But in the next statement it turns into *lelagon* performed in unison by the two *pesindhen*. The *gerong* spice it up with vocal interjections and interlocking claps. In this section the drum provides lively patterns simulating an accompaniment for a *golek* dance, while the pair of *bonang* perform interlocking parts. Cokrowolo is a delightful relief after so heavy-duty a gendhing as Babar Layar.

MARASANJA

The only reason that as a child I knew of Gendhing Marasanja was because it was the name of my first gamelan teacher. In the old days it was the practice of the Kasultanan kraton to award players in the service of gamelan performance with names of gendhing. Thus, they had Raden Bekel Mandrawa, a famous gender player, who incidentally was also the grandfather of Mas Suhirjan the gamelan maker, Raden Wedana Larassumbaga, a top notch drummer from the 1930s to the 1950s, the favorite of dancers, Raden Bekel Jatikumara, a vocalist also performing as Gareng (a clown) in the kraton dance drama, Raden Bekel Sri Malela, a copyist of the Kraton Manuscripts, Raden Marasanja, a *bonang* player. Although a name does not necessarily reflect one's competency, Pak Mara was proud of the fact that his name was the name of this austere Gendhing, not merely the name of a *ketawang*.

The piece begins with *adangiyah* and the introduction by the *bonang*. The end of the *bonang* introduction sets the tempo of the following *lamba* section. *Lamba*, or "singling" (as opposed to *rangkep*, "doubling") is an abstraction of the first gongan of Merong. The length of this abstraction varies depending on when the *irama* is *dados*, "set" or "ready," i.e., it has arrived at the desired speed. At this point the ensemble will continue with the piece. At the stroke of the next gong (beat 256) the piece goes back to the beginning. For two kenongan, 128 beats, the piece remains unaltered. But on the third kenongan the drum hints an acceleration of tempo which signals *Pangkat nDhawah*, a transition to *nDhawah*. On the fourth kenongan, the *Pangkat nDhawah* proper, I feel there are 32 beats missing.

Unlike the *nDhawah* section of Babar Layar, the *nDawah* of Marasanja is a "whole note" type of *balungan* known as *balungan ndhawahi* or *balungan nibani*. Common practice requires that with this type of *balungan* the two *demung* (lead saron) will play *imbal* (interlocking) *demung*, in which they subdivide the space

between the strokes of the *balungan* into 16 density referents. The first *demung* would anticipate the *balungan* pitch on the odd beat, i.e. 1, 3, 5, 7, etc., or the "off beat" in the Javanese way of thinking; and second *demung* would play the neighbor tone, preferably the upper neighbor if available, on beat 2, 4, 6, etc. In a descending *gatra* (a group of four beats), for example . 3 . 2, or . 6 . 5, the first *demung* may prefer to play the second note. If he did so it would lead to a situation where the first *demung* and second *demung* would play the same note and its upper neighbor note respectively 32 times. This of course, would be boring. To liven up the part, the first *demung*, maintaining his pulse, may skip playing the pitch directly above second *demung*. Similarly, the second *demung* may skip down below the main pitch of first *demung*, or skip above the first *demung's* variation tone. Correctly played, the second *demung* must hit the *balungan* tone when a *balungan* tone is struck. In this recording, our second *demung* frequently commits a common mistake by remaining on its neighbor tone rather than playing the *balungan* tone like the rest of the saron when the *balungan* tone is called for. These mistakes result in unpleasant "crashes" at the stroke of the *balungan*.

In *balungan dhawahi*, in addition to playing the *balungan*, the saron section would insert a *pancer* tone, i.e. a recurring same pitch struck between the main *balungan*. In this piece the *pancer* tone is pitch 'low 1'. Personally, I would prefer to use pitch "high 1."

The *slenthem* plays *ngembat*. The process is this: the *slenthem* player would double the density referents of the *balungan*, then, anticipating it, play the notes of the *balungan* on the *slenthem* density referents 1, 2, 3, sustaining the third beat and letting the saron *ndhawahi* on the fourth beat. During the fast, or *seseg*, section, the *slenthem* anticipates the *balungan* on the off-beat of the saron instead.

The revivals of some of these Gendhing Ageng soran are desirable and commendable even if they contain mistakes. In this recording the musicians are very familiar with the Sesegan section of Babar Layar, as this is what they frequently hear. They seem to be more familiar with Marasanja as a whole. Because of this there are fewer glitches in Marasanja. The *bonang* player is more comfortable playing his part, and is able to highlight the Yogyanese features of *bonang* playing style. It is assumed that these revivals are based on the Kraton Manuscripts. Having read Pakem Wiromo several decades ago, I must say that Kraton Manuscripts are to be taken with knowledge of performance practice. Perhaps those who are knowledgeable of the performance practice are no longer with us. I am inclined to think that the "lost" 32 saron beats in Babar Layar and Marasanja, as well as the awkward tonal transition of Babar Layar, are due to the unavailability of those with knowledge of former performance practice. Nonetheless, in these revivals at least there are more notes that are documented than those which may have been lost. This is a fate more fortunate than the one of several attempts of classical dance revivals.

A remark must be made on the manner in which the pieces are ended. It has been common practice today that at the conclusion of the piece, in addition to the delay that is normally executed in the last stroke of Gong, the saron group and the kenong further delay their last stroke and hence create too long a time interval between the last stroke of the Gong and the last stroke of saron. This practice follows the style of the famous *dhalang* Ki Nartosabdo in the last quarter of the 20th century. There seems to be a belief today that the farther the last saron stroke from the last Gong stroke, the more refined the result. As a former dancer, I find that this way of ending a piece is somewhat disconcerting, and creates a dilemma. Should I put my foot down on the Gong stroke or, later, on the saron stroke? In my childhood the last stroke of Gong and the last stroke of *balungan* were orally recited as "gyoong," because the ensemble follows the last Gong stroke only by a tiny fraction of a second. That is the way I would end a gendhing.

Text and translation of Pak Cokro's Ketawang COKROWOLO (1968)

The English translation of the Kinanthi stanzas is by Hardja Susilo. The translation of Pak Cokro's lelagon is by Adi Deswijaya and Rosella Balossino.

KINANTHI

*Mideringrat angelangut
Lelana njajah negari
Mubeng tepining samodra
Sumengka anggraning wukir
Anelasak wanawasa
Tumurun ing jurang trebis*

*Sayekti kalamun suwung
Tangeh miriba kang warni
Lan sira pepujaning wang
Manawa dhasaring bumi
Miwah luhuring akasa
Tuwin jroning jalanidhi*

*Iku ta sapa kang weruh
nanging kiraning tyas mami
sanadyan ing tri Bawana
ana-a kang madha warni
maksih sumèh semunira
ruruh rarase respati*

Around the world far far away
Wandering in many lands
Combing beaches
Climbing mountains
Traversing through forests
Trekking down deep ravines

Indeed feeling empty
Impossible to find resemblance
None but you whom I adore
Nothing at the bottom of the earth
Nor in heavens above
In the depths of the ocean neither

Who would ever know
But my heart tells me
Even if in the three worlds
A likeness is found
She won't be as well disposed
Nor elegant

LELAGON (Tjokrowasito)
*Rerenganing bangun-bangun esuk
Katon sumamburat Hyang Pratanggapati
Mungup-mungup aneng wukir
Yayah sung pratandha ndang makarti
Ing pakaryanta dhewe-dhewe
Saweneh menyang sawah nyangking kudhi
Ngok-ngok nuntun sapi garu klawan luku
Menyang pasar nggendhong daganganne
Sebrak-sebrak geyong nyangking kendhi amek tirta
Mangkono-warna-warna sakehing dumadi*

Adornment of the morning star,
The sun heralds himself making the sky red
Peeking from behind the mountain
As a signal that it is time to begin the daily work
Each following his assignment in life.
Some set out to the rice field carrying a sickle,
Some go "ngok-ngok" at the ox that pulls plough and harrow,
Some walk to the market carrying goods wrapped in cloth bundles
Some carry an earthenware pitcher to fetch water.
So behave all kinds of men and beings.



A Brief Biography of KPH Notoprojo

Late in his career, already having had his name changed several times (i.e. Wasi Jolodoro, KRT Wasitodipuro, KRT Wasitodiningrat), he finally became KPH Notoprojo. The initials KPH (Kanjeng Pangeran Haryo) are used in Java as the highest ranking honorific court title for one who is of royal descent. He was affectionately known by his students (in Java and the United States), by other Javanese musician, and by his

friends and acquaintances as Pak Tjokro (Tjokrowasito). He is generally acknowledged to be the leading musician and composer of Central Java in the late 20th century.

Tjokrowasito was born on March 17, 1904, at Gunung Ketur, and was raised near the Pakualaman court in Yogyakarta. Tjokrowasito came from a long line of great musicians and dancers who devoted their life to the glories of the central Javanese performing arts tradition.

When he was sixteen years old, Tjokrowasito's career began with his becoming a gamelan member and colleague of the very prestigious court musicians of the Pakualaman Palace. In 1962, he was promoted to the position of director of the court gamelan, thus he was responsible for carrying on the impressive tradition of classical gamelan music and dance which had flourished in the court for centuries.

After World War II, Tjokrowasito was officially employed by Radio Republik Indonesia Nusantara II Yogyakarta and began to compose again. During his directorship at RRI, there were various classical gamelan recordings made under his direction: indeed he has been purveyor of both traditional gamelan works as well as modern compositions.

Tjokrowasito continued composing through the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's. As he grew older, however, he continued to write even fresher and more profound compositions—veritable masterpieces that were received with great praise and critical acclaim. As a composer of dance music, he was instrumental in the creation of the first production of the Sendra Tari Ramayana (Ramayana Dance Drama).

From 1957 to 1971, he performed extensively throughout Europe, Asia, North America and the former USSR, also as a member of the Indonesian government's cultural exchange program.

Even after joining the faculty of the California Institute of The Arts in 1971, he retained his position until 1982 as leader of court gamelan at the Pakualaman. While a full time faculty member in the World Music Department of the California Institute of the Arts, he taught many workshops and summer sessions throughout the United States, particularly programs sponsored by the Center for World Music.

Tjokrowasito created more than two hundreds compositions, which may be divided in three categories: Music for Dance Dramas, Music Theater, and Instrumental Pieces (listed by pathet).

On July 17, 2004, Pak Tjokro's 100th birthday was celebrated with an extraordinary gamelan session at his pendapa in Yogyakarta. On August 30, 2007, the great master left this world.

(Contributed by Pak Tri Warsono)

TRACK 1: Gendhing bonang BABAR LAYAR pelog lima (27:25)
TRACK 2: Tjokrowasito: Ketawang COKROWOLO slendro sanga (13:36)
TRACK 3: Gendhing bonang MARASANJA slendro nem (25:59)

Gamelan Kyai Sekar Tunjung
Ensemble 'Karawitan Raras Raos Irama', pimpinan Mas Riyo Muryowinoto, kendhang Murjono
Pesindhen: Kasilah, Mugini
Recording made on September 28, 2008, in Pak Cokro's pendopo, Yogyakarta
Musical design, mastering, and photos: John Noise Manis

We thank Pak Tri Warsono, Pak Cokro's son, for letting us have and record the performance.



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